

BATTLE OF DALE FARM

How the day's events unfolded

7.30am: A convoy of riot police vans arrived at Dale Farm

8.45am: Bailiffs started to knock down a wall built by travellers near the protesters' camp and were pelted with bottles and missiles

7.15am: Riot police holding shields and holding up and advanced towards the camp, as traveller women ran into their homes in tears

7.30am: Cops broke down a fence and were confronted by angry protesters throwing bricks at them. A protester allegedly threatening to attack two police officers was Thrown

7.45am: A caravan was torched and thick black smoke billowed across Dale Farm

8am: Police and protesters entered and stood off near the makeshift barricade at the entrance to the site

8.30am: Three fire engines arrived, but crews decided the blaze was under control and didn't tackle it

8.30am: Traveller Noreen Sayers suffered a back injury and paramedics rushed to her aid

9.00am: A second caravan was set alight, causing a loud explosion. Four people fell ill from smoke inhalation

10am: Several caravans were moved away from the protest barricade and onto a nearby field as part of the last week's High Court ruling

10.15am: Protesters urinate on police spray to receive fermentable liquids from behind the barricade

10.30am: Police and bailiffs wearing climbing gear climbed onto the barricade and a tree to try to prevent protesters down

1.30pm: Five cops boarded a cherry picker and approached the watch tower at the top of the barricade to persuade protesters to get down

1.50pm: A man secured himself to a scaffolding pole on the barricade

1.50pm: A protester was taken down from the barricade by police in a cage

2.30pm: Travellers were hand-cuffed by police and taken down from the scaffolding on a cherry picker

2.30pm: A protester was taken to hospital, suffering from a suspected seizure

4.40pm: The last of seven protesters were removed from the (barricade)

5.30pm: Protesters threw



Come on down - police start removing protesters from the scaffolding making up the raised gateway

62 extra pitches are still required by law

By JON AUSTIN
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GARSDON may still have to provide 62 extra traveller pitches after spending up to £1million on the Dale Farm eviction, the Echo can reveal.

Council bosses have confirmed they will provide any more sites and move due to challenge the figure at the High Court until Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said he would scrap the targets when the coalition came to power.

However, Neil Coston, head of enforcement at Basildon Council, admitted at the eve of the eviction the targets were still in force and the council the council should have to provide them by the end of the year.

Mr Coston argued that even if

they already have 110 legal

pitches and feel other authorities need to make provision.

However, Mr Coston said: "The regional spatial strategy (pitch targets) is still part of the development plan and the weight that must be given to it is substantial. It demands 62 pitches by the end of 2011."

He said a team should be prepared to identify suitable locations for the future plots.

He said a challenge to the High Court by a developer meant Mr Pickles had "scrupulously" scrapped the targets and they were still in place until new legislation goes through.

Tory leaders thought they could ignore the targets because of Mr Pickles' intention.

He said it would take about three to four years to complete before any sites were brought forward, so it would be no help to

people at Dale Farm, even though there could eventually be enough new pitches to accommodate all the families currently facing eviction.

The discussion over the pitches came as councillors voted over a last-ditch bid for planning permission for a pitch at Dale Farm owned by widow Mary Flynn, 74. It is one of three plots where the council can remove the hard standing but not any of the caravans. However, it still has no planning permission.

Her application argued,

because the council had to provide the pitches, it should be a charity, and was seen as a test case for the rest of the camp getting permission.

Cost is within £18million budget

THE cost of the eviction is within the £18million budget set aside for it, Basildon Council has said.

Although the authority can't predict the final cost at the moment, it isn't expected to spiral beyond the initial worst case scenario.

Police costs are budgeted at

£10million and the council-funded clearance is expected to cost up to £8million.

The council costs include bailiffs from Constant and Co, who are costing £2.2million.

A further £1million is being spent on temporary accommodation for staff involved in the operation.

Additional council resources to support efforts after the eviction are expected to cost £250,000 and a temporary advice and liaison centre set up is costing £100,000.

Ambulance services are costing £200,000, fire service support is £50,000 and £900,000 has been set aside for operational contingency - in case any extra costs arise.

Additional council resources to

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Travellers' tactic to buy more time

By JON AUSTIN
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COUNCIL bosses have admitted a tactic to move several caravans on to three "protected" pitches at Dale Farm could buy families extra time at the site.

The travellers move as many caravans as possible on to three of the 11 plots available while the council can only remove the hard standing, but not any vehicles or caravans due to a technicality.

Bailiffs can remove the caravans temporarily to get to the hardcore, but admitted yesterday they will have to put them all back again when the site is cleared.

A council spokesman said: "If

there are a number of caravans

on the pitches we can remove

them. The hard standing will be

removed and there will just be

mu to put the caravans back on

"If they want us to move all the

caravans back we will have to,

but we are stressing to the fami

lies that it will not be very pleas

ant for them.

"They will have no solid base

and there will be no access road

left so it should be

very unpleasant

left, so it would be very unpleasant. The caravans would eventually have to be lowered off and they could be damaged by the surface."

The caravans cannot be removed because when the council served eviction notices on the site, it only addressed the hard standing, not the caravans.

Lorraine Brown, chief selector for the council, maintained it had acted correctly despite the apparent blunder.

She said: "There were no caravans on these plots when the notices were served, so it was

transforming the land back into a green field is expected to take about six weeks.

The operation will continue after dark each night, but travellers will only be moved off the site during daylight hours.

Tony Ball, council leader, said he wasn't in a position to give a date when the clearance would be completed.

BA1504352 [v1].JPG
16 cm x 9
Hobbycraft



Day's end - the scaffolding tower is floodlit after a day of clashes

Picture: LUAN MARSHALL BA50996